

Summer 2005 JRCOSTEP Experience

This past summer has gone by extremely quickly and I attribute that to the positive experiences I had as a Junior COSTEP in the Technical Support Branch at the Division of Engineering Services (DES) in Seattle. This branch of the DES is staffed by both architects and engineers and handles a wide variety of technical jobs pertaining to the construction and renovation of health care facilities. During the short time I was employed as a COSTEP I was given the opportunity to work with professional engineers, receive valuable career-related training, and travel frequently.

One of the main projects I worked on involved analyzing the life cycle cost of the construction, maintenance, and operation of new facilities. My role in this effort was to become familiar with the process and provide suggestions on how to make it more user-friendly. In doing so I was able to get a comprehensive look at what goes in to building and maintaining a health care facility. I was also able to see an example of some of the project work given to the engineers with the Indian Health Service.



While employed as a COSTEP I was also able to attend a three-day training course covering the latest version of the AutoCAD architectural software. The course was set up for professional engineers and architects looking to gain proficiency in the use of the software, which can be used in a wide range of practical applications. By being given the chance to attend this course I was able to gain a useful skill that made me a more valuable employee and for that I am grateful.

Another highlight of my time with the DES office in Seattle was the travel. One project that was happening at the time of my employment was in the construction phase and it was the job of our office to make monthly trips to the construction site to perform inspections on the work being done. Since the site is located on a small island in South East Alaska, getting there required a thrilling flight on a float plane. The island itself had many miles of scenic beaches that I was able to explore and enjoy but the views from the float plane as it passed over the Alaskan coastline were the most memorable.



In conclusion I feel that the main benefit that JRCOSTEPs come away with is the professional, “real-world” experience that is gained through their working in an office along side the engineers and architects but there is also a sense of adventure that comes along with each assignment.